

First Responders Team Captures Inaccurate Spend Data



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Having accurate spend data is very critical to the State Purchasing Division but it must also be a focus by every state entity. Over the past two years, State Purchasing has found that millions of dollars in statewide procurement spend was not categorized accurately by state entities. Inaccurate spend data presents a number of problems: State Purchasing cannot accurately determine which statewide contracts are needed by state entities; state entities cannot accurately anticipate their purchasing needs, to include which agency contracts are needed; and procurement savings can be overlooked statewide. Most importantly, State Purchasing is tasked to provide statewide spend data to the Office of Planning and Budget each year. These reports are used for anticipating budget needs of every state entity and legislative decisions are also made from this data.

State Purchasing has found that NIGP Code and Purchase Type Code errors are the major causes of inaccurate statewide procurement data. Because of the volume of these errors, Deputy Commissioner Leslie Lowe has redirected staff resources to form what is now known as the “First Responders Team” to address the seriousness of this problem. This new team resides in the Process Improvement business unit and their main focus is to monitor procurement spend data for accuracy. When errors are detected, the team will train and educate entity staff on how to make significant improvements to their data. Josh Borden, policy and operations manager, is leading the team which is comprised of Jared Harper and Robert Sokalski, audit data analysts, who are auditing the data. Danielle Haynes, process improvement auditor, serves on the team and is mainly responsible for educating and training state entity procurement staff on how to lower their error rates. The First Responders’ goals are to bring awareness statewide on the importance of accurate procurement data and to offer assistance for improving it. Without accurate spend data, state entities could risk serious negative implications and the First Responders are helping to prevent that.